



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

A USAID-sponsored Volunteer Receives a Presidential Honor Award for His Service in Central Asia

American entomologist Dr. Allen Knutson has recently won a Volunteer Service Award from the U.S. President's Council on Service and Civic Participation for his work in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan under the USAID-sponsored Farmer to Farmer program. "I hope my work contributed in a small way," says Dr. Knutson, who spent two weeks in Turkmenistan in 1998 and two more weeks in Kyrgyzstan in 2007, consulting local producers on the management of pests attacking horticultural crops.

Agricultural production is vital to Turkmenistan. However, a variety of insect pests significantly reduce yield and quality of the crops. "Many of the crops, crop pests, and production practices in these central Asian countries are similar to those in west Texas, thus we were able to suggest management practices for many of the pests we encountered," says Dr. Knutson. He prepared a series of recommendations on the Biologically-Based Integrated Pest Management Program for Turkmenistan and trained around 200 Turkmen farmers and entomologists on the issue. "Our programs focused on the wise use of insecticides to avoid negative impacts on health and economic and environmental problems associated with their misuse and over use," he says. Dr. Knutson also worked with two pest management production facilities at Charjow and Kerki, or "biofactories." As a result of his suggestions, the biofactories improved operations, expanded their range of products, and signed contracts with farmers to purchase biofactory's crop protection agents.

"I greatly enjoyed meeting the people of these two countries and thank those I met for their warm hospitality," says Dr. Knutson.

Farmer to Farmer is one of the many assistance projects implemented in Central Asia by USAID on behalf of the American people. Since 1992 the American people through USAID have provided over \$1.5 billion in assistance programs that support economic growth, democratic institutions, health care, and education systems in Central Asia.

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